

Description

Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial is a fitting tribute to both a pivotal U.S. naval victory in the War of 1812 and a lasting peace between former enemies. The memorial consists of a 352-foot high column on South Bass Island in Lake Erie surrounded by 25 acres of landscaped grounds. Visible for miles, it stands as a reminder not only of the events of the War of 1812, but also as a symbol of international peace between Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. The memorial was built by a nine-state commission with matching federal funds between 1912 and 1915. Twenty-one years after it was built, Congress charged the National Park Service to preserve and manage the memorial.

Today, visitors enter Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial through the rotunda, where six officers from the War of 1812 are interred. Once inside the rotunda, visitors travel to the top of the memorial via steps and an elevator to a viewing platform. From this platform—on a clear day—visitors can see across Lake Erie to the battle site and beyond to Canadian shores. At the visitor center, a film can be viewed, along with exhibits interpreting not only the Battle of Lake Erie, during which sailors lead by Commander Oliver Hazard Perry prevailed, but also the building of the International Peace Memorial and its lasting meaning. In summer months, the landscaped grounds of the memorial provide an open space that serves both as a calm, contemplative escape from the otherwise energetic, busy island and as a recreational space for both visitors and local island residents.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



Foundation Document Overview

Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial

Ohio



Contact Information

For more information about the *Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial Foundation Document*, contact: pevi_superintendent@nps.gov or 419-285-2184 or write to: Superintendent, Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, P.O. Box 549, Put-in-Bay, OH 43456-0549

Purpose

Significance

Fundamental Resources and Values



The purpose of Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial is to

- *preserve the memorial and its cultural landscape*
- *preserve the historical associations connected with the Battle of Lake Erie, the War of 1812, and the memorial, acknowledging that these associations involve shared history*
- *inculcate the lessons of international peace by arbitration and disarmament*

Park managers achieve this purpose by honoring the story of the battle and the people involved, by preserving the resources and values at the park, and by educating visitors in the lessons of peace.

Park significance statements express why park resources and values are important enough to warrant national park designation. Statements of the park significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are directly linked to the purpose of the park and are substantiated by data or consensus. They reflect the most current scientific or scholarly inquiry and cultural perceptions, which may have changed since the park’s establishment.

Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial is significant because

- This battle, fought between American and British naval forces, was a decisive American victory in the War of 1812 for forces under the command of Oliver Hazard Perry, who launched the battle from the strategic safe harbor at South Bass Island.
- The victory precipitated events with both personal consequences for individuals involved in the battle and far-reaching results for nations involved in the War of 1812—settlement patterns (as tribes were removed making way for territorial expansion) and international relations (as peace was achieved through the Treaty of Ghent).
- The memorial serves as a symbol of international peace and a constant reminder of the ongoing cooperation between former enemies. It was an engineering marvel of its time and an architectural statement to memorialize the battle as well as the centennial of lasting peace between Britain, Canada, and the United States. Commissioned by nine states and located on South Bass Island, the location is symbolic for being within sight of the undefended border.
- The lasting results of peace symbolized by the memorial include the realization of turning enemies into allies through disarmament and arbitration and the benefits of international cooperation.
- The memorial offers the ability to interpret war from multiple perspectives in acknowledgement of our shared history.



Fundamental resources and values are closely related to a park’s purpose and warrant primary consideration in planning and management because they are critical to maintaining the purpose and significance. If these resources are allowed to deteriorate, the purpose and/or significance of park could be jeopardized. A loss of major impact to a fundamental resource or value could constitute impairment, violating the NPS Organic Act of 1916.

The fundamental resources and values of Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial are

- **the monument and its designed landscape**—the inviting, restrained, stylized clearing frames and organizes the Beaux Arts design of the memorial in a pure water setting. This includes the peaceful and reflective spaces on the grounds that can be experienced through multiple senses and the sanctity of the rotunda and crypt.
- **views toward the monument from the ground**—360-degree views of the monument from a distance during the daytime and nighttime as it appears to rise out of the water into clear air.
- **visitor experience from the observation deck**—the ability to safely access views of the island, battle site, and Canada from the observation deck in a predominantly natural soundscape and in air quality that enhances visibility.
- **the curatorial and archival records collection**—items in this collection relating the full history of the construction of the memorial and the context of the Battle of Lake Erie are vital to interpreting the story of the memorial and the battle as understanding of both evolves over time.

Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial has other important resources and values that are not fundamental to the park purpose and significance, but are still important resources to protect and address in planning actions.

The other important resources and values of Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial are

- items in curatorial collection related to battle commemorations
- the inviting clearing outside of the national register district that offers open space on an otherwise highly commercialized island

